

## Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01

DODE-00 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 IO-14 PRS-01 H-03 EUR-25

OMB-01 L-03 DRC-01 /109 W  
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R 220743Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3943

S E C R E T CANBERRA 5526

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MARR, AUS, XO  
SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. INDIAN  
OCEAN POLICY

REF: A) STATE 183372; B) CANBERRA 4697; C) CANBERRA 4527;  
D) CANBERRA 5439

### 1. AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. INDIAN

OCEAN POLICY (REF A) HAVE BEEN ONLY RARELY EXPRESSED OVER PAST  
TWO MONTHS SINCE REPORTS OF U.S. USE OF COCOS FOR RECONNAISSANCE  
FLIGHTS (REFS B AND C). VISIT OF GROUP FROM UN COMMITTEE OF  
24 TO COCOS AUG 8-11 OCCASIONED FLURRY OF PRESS STORIES, BUT  
FOCUS WAS ON SITUATION AT COCOS ITSELF, RATHER THAN ON LARGER  
ISSUE OF INDIAN OCEAN POLICY (SEE ALSO REF D).

2. TESTIMONY BEFORE SENATE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE IN LATE  
JULY BY DCI WILLIAM E. COLBY WAS COVERED IN AUSTRALIAN MEDIA  
AUG 5, BUT ONLY EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS IN NEWSPAPER THE AUSTRALIAN  
AUG 5, WHICH STATED THAT "DIEGO GARCIA BASE STILL MAKES SENSE"  
ADDING, "IN AUSTRALIA THERE ARE PLENTY OF SUPPORTERS  
FOR A DIEGO GARCIA BASE. ELECTORAL MISFORTUNE HAS COST THEM THEIR  
POLITICAL SPEARHEAD, THE DLP, BUT THEY STILL HAVE ARTICULATE  
SPOKESMEN WHO ARGUE THE DANGERS OF ALLOWING THE INDIAN OCEAN TO  
BECOME A RUSSIAN LAKE... THE AUSTRALIAN CONTINUES TO SUPPORT

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AN AMERICAN PRESENCE ON DIEGO GARCIA..." PAPER MAKES CLEAR ITS

CONCERN IS POSSIBILITY OF SINO-SOVIET HOSTILITIES WHICH MIGHT CATCH AUSTRALIA IN THE MIDDLE WITH BOTH SOVIETS AND CHINESE NEEDING AMERICAN MEDIATION, AT LEAST. "THAT MEDIATION WILL HAVE MORE WEIGHT IF THERE IS A CREDIBLE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO THE INDIAN OCEAN," AUSTRALIAN CONCLUDES.

3. FOLLOWING REJECTION OF APPROPRIATION FOR DIEGO GARCIA EXTENSIONS IN FY1974 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL, PLUS WELTER OF CONFLICTING TESTIMONY BY ADMINISTRATION WITNESSES AND SHARP CRITICISM BY RECENTLY-RETired PENTAGON MILITARY AND CIVILIAN FIGURES, DFA EXPRESSED SOME PUZZLEMENT TO US OVER STATUS OF DIEGO GARCIA EXTENSIONS. WE HAVE MENTIONED THAT APPROPRIATIONS REQUEST FOR DIEGO GARCIA EXTENSIONS WOULD BE IN FY 1975 BUDGET, AND PRESS HAS DULY REPORTED APPROVAL OF REQUEST BY HOUSE.

4. COMMENT: AS DEPT AWARE, GOA HAS CRITICIZED SOME ASPECTS OF U.S. INDIAN OCEAN POLICY, ESPECIALLY DIEGO GARCIA EXTENSIONS. HOWEVER, UNTIL SOME MAJOR DEVELOPMENT OCCURS, BELIEVE THERE WILL BE LITTLE NEW ATTENTION DEVOTED TO THIS SUBJECT EITHER BY GOA OR BY AUSTRALIAN MEDIA. WESTERN AUSTRALIANS SUPPORT US INDIAN OCEAN PRESENCE AND DIEGO GARCIA PROJECT, AS DOES OPPOSITION LIBERAL PARTY PLATFORM. LABOR GOVERNMENT IS QUITE PROUD OF ITS "INDEPENDENT AUSTRALIAN INITIATIVE" URGING US AND USSR TO NEGOTIATE MUTUAL RESTRAINT IN INDIAN OCEAN. BARNARD OR PRITCHETT WILL UNDOUBTEDLY RAISE THIS MATTER AGAIN DURING FORTHCOMING WASHINGTON TALKS. DEFENCE DEPARTMENT, INCLUDING PRITCHETT, IS CONSIDERABLY MORE SYMPATHETIC TOWARD DIEGO GARCIA THAN IS DEPARTMENT FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND LABOR LEADERSHIP.

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** SURVEILLANCE, INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE, POLICIES, OBSERVATION AIRCRAFT, PUBLIC ATTITUDES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 22 AUG 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** boyleja  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Reference:** A) STATE 183372; B) CANBERRA 4697; C, ) CANBERRA 4527;  
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**Review Date:** 08 JUL 2002  
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**Review Referrals:** n/a  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL PERCEPTIONS OF U.S. INDIAN OCEAN POLICY  
**TAGS:** MARR, AS, XO, US  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005